



Louise Rendle - Head of Network Services



The beginning of 2012 is proving to be a busy one already:

On the 24th of January we held a large General meeting, at which members voted in favour of changing WSUN's Mission Statement and Memorandum of Association in order that we can begin to look at additional funding opportunities in the future. WSUN's aims of supporting people to bring about change to the services they use will of course remain the same, as will our commitment to be involved in campaigning and influencing others by promoting good practice. We wish to extend this opportunity to a wider group of people.



The outreach team have been busy organising Forums for March and April, following the success of our very well attended 20th birthday forums at the end of last year. Members told us that they enjoyed hearing from the Police and Wiltshire Council about initiatives like the Help to Live at Home project and have asked us for more of these informative sessions with an opportunity for their own feedback.



We are also planning an arts project for young adults between 18 and 25 years. The group will produce a multi media piece that can be shared with others. The aim of the project is to find out what it's like to be living in Wiltshire in 2012. For more information please contact Denise or Amber.

The Help to Live at Home's Customer Reference Group continues to go from strength to strength, you can read about its ground breaking work later in the newsletter.

As always if you have any comments about our Newsletter or our new look website, perhaps there is an article or information you would like to see, please contact us.

With all the proposed Government and Local Authority initiatives and changes, I am sure we will be kept very busy seeking our members advice and opinions during the coming months.

Dorothy Roberts - Co-Chair

Welcome to the Chairs corner with a difference.

Most of the meetings and events have been covered in the staff reports.

For some time Louise has been considering having a members article in the Newsletter. An interesting accessible venue, something amusing or 'keep away – dangerous' and I have been volunteered as the guinea pig.

A day out at Cotswold Wildlife Park

Sitting quietly in the Lemur enclosure curiosity seemed to attract the Ringtailed ones. Other visitors were stopping at a distance to watch them with their new toy.

The caption came to mind when I saw the two photos that are printed below.



So if you have visited an attraction or a place of interest and you feel that it would be of interest and accessible to others then we would like to hear from you.

Information Feature

Wiltshire Warmth

Save money on your heating bills - for free or discounted loft and cavity wall insulation call 0800 512 012 for Wiltshire Council's warm and well scheme or go to www.warmandwell.co.uk or ring 01722 434349 for Wiltshire Council's home energy adviser.

Advice on how to make your home warmer and to access grants Ridgeway Care & Repair (part of Aster Living) can offer you advice on how to make your home warmer, healthier and more energy efficient.

Get information on heating or insulation grants that could be available to you. If you have low income or a health condition the work may even be free. Ridgeway can also help to arrange private works with reputable trusted contactors. Call for more information on 01380 829009, textphone 07720700200 or email wcr@asterliving.co.uk

Benefit advice

For advice on help with benefits and paying your fuel bills, contact Wiltshire Citizens Advice Bureau on 0844 375 2775 or 0300 456 8375.

Development Outreach Team



Well another busy three months and the opportunity to meet as many members as possible at the Forums and through meetings and visits have been fantastic.

Help To Live At Home

As mentioned in the last newsletter a group of members have, for nearly the last two years, been involved with Wiltshire Council's Help to Live at Home project. This group has now become known as the Customer Reference Group (CRG).

The CRG has now had training from Wiltshire Council. They have also had a meeting with three of the four companies who have been awarded the contracts to provide domiciliary care.

Part of the Help to Live at Home project includes contracts for providing equipment and 'telecare' packages for people as well as providing a first response service. The equipment contract has been awarded to Medequip who in turn have sub contracted the 'telecare' part of the contract to Aster Living. "Telecare is the term used for equipment that can be installed into a person's home to provide an alert or alarm system. It can include things like lifeline pendants, smoke alarms, fall alarms, heat sensors and many more. If the alarm should be set off, it goes to a call centre who will provide a response to the customer. This response service contract has been awarded to Wiltshire Medical Services (WMS). So in the event of a person's alarm being set off WMS will receive the call and make a decision on whether to send a paramedic, another service or one of their first responder teams. The CRG had a very useful presentation on the uses of 'telecare' packages and many members of the group have visited Wiltshire Medical Services to see how they will operate the first response service.



The main purpose of the CRG will be to monitor how all these providers meet the needs of all those people who use their services. They will do this by speaking to those who have care packages or use telecare packages to find out if there are any issues or indeed if the service is meeting their needs and expectations. The findings that the CRG makes will be referred to both the Care Provider and Wiltshire Council. As the CRG is an independent and impartial group it is hoped that customers of the providers will feel able to speak freely to them and give a true picture of the service they receive.

Older People

We helped at the Older People's event in both Corsham and Salisbury where the Slipper Exchange proved very popular and we were able to introduce ourselves and sign up several members.

We also attended the Older People's Forum planning meeting in Swindon and as you will see from David Brown's article we would like to hear from our members who would like to join and receive more information about the future development and work of the Swindon Older People's Forum. Copies of the constitution can be requested and WSUN's Development Outreach Team will be helping to facilitate the four meetings planned throughout the year, also offering to visit members who may not be able to attend the meeting to gather feedback and ideas to support Older People's service provision.

Stonehenge Consultation

In the winter 2011 newsletter there was an update on the English Heritage Consultation for the new visitor centre for Stonehenge. In December, as reported a group of members who have been involved with the Stonehenge Visitor Centre Consultations met to discuss the accessibility and suitability of a transport system designed to take visitors from the visitor centre to the stones.



This transport system a form of 'land train' was discussed in some detail. A lot of questions were raised about how wheelchair users and others with mobility problems would access the carriages of the 'land train'. It was felt, at the end of this session, that members of the group had raised a lot of points that needed to be 'tested' before the design of the proposed land train was passed to the manufacturers.



A second meeting was held at the beginning of February and Peter Carson and Martin Harvey from English Heritage came to meet members of the group and produced a life size plan of a carriage, marked out on the floor of the meeting room. Group members could actually see if it was possible for wheelchair users and those with mobility problems to easily get into the carriage. It was a most interesting session and did, as expected, raise even more questions for English Heritage and the designers to look into.

I believe that all the members of the group who took part felt that it was a really positive exercise and I know that English Heritage were very pleased with the input the members were able to make. English Heritage have agreed to keep us updated on the project.

Acute Care Forum

We continue to attend the Acute Care Forum on a monthly basis at Green Lane Hospital. The Acute Care Forum is a group that meets monthly to explore performance and service development at both Green Lane Hospital in Devizes and Fountain Way Hospital in Salisbury.

Feedback is given to the Acute Care Forum where particular issues arise that may affect the care pathway of an individual.

Care Pathways ensure equal access to services across Wiltshire. Feedback is also given from the Community Mental Health Teams, Occupational Health Team and Psychological Therapies. There is representation from the inpatient Carers Representatives and Ward staff. Any complaints and areas of good practice are reviewed and updates on the Acute Care Services Redesign is given.

Community Campuses

WSUN has recently supported the work of Melksham, Royal Wootton Bassett and Calne Shadow Community Operations Boards. The Boards are charged with developing community campuses that bring together and increase local services to meet the needs of its local community area. Services may be different in each area offering leisure, internet cafe, personal care rooms, training rooms, meeting spaces, council officer 'hot desks' etc. so it is the work of the Boards to make sure the campuses are welcoming and accessible.

We were very pleased to be able to invite members to Equality and Inclusion workshops to share their expertise and knowledge. In addition to how the campuses could be accessible to include disabled people, the Boards were asked to consider programming of activities, opening hours, communication (languages, plain English, symbols, different formats etc.), different cultures, all ages, staff training and travelling to /from the campuses. All the contributions and further questions were sent to Wiltshire Council who have subsequently responded. If you want more information, please contact Wiltshire Council's Campus and Operational Delivery Models Team on 01225 718350 or visit Wiltshire Council's website.

Mental Health

Members who use mental health services in Wiltshire continue to meet 4 times a year. The groups are small, informal and welcoming. They provide members with a chance to keep up to date with changes that may affect them and raise concerns. These meetings are a great way of shaping services as concerns are taken forward by Denise and Samiha (Service User Reps) to manager's meetings. Recent guest speakers have included Peter Hollingworth (Intensive Support Service Manger) who provided an update regarding the AWP Redesign and Sarah MacLennan (NHS Communications Manager) who spoke about the changes in the NHS and the introduction of Clinical Commissioning. The next Our Time To Talk (OTTT) meeting will focus on Alabaré *Include* - members will have a chance to talk to managers from Wiltshire Council and Alabaré. Denise and Samiha would like to hear views on Alabaré's use of '**Christian Care and Support**' and use of the fish symbol on promotional material. If you have views to share, please contact the development outreach team to pass on to the reps before Thursday 29th March. WSUN knows that it is not always possible for people to attend meetings so if you would like to be involved in another way please let us know.

New Developments

WSUN has been working towards increasing involvement of younger people who use community, health and/or social services. A very exciting multi-media arts project is currently being planned. Working with a local established arts group, WSUN hopes to attract a small group of 8-10 young people who are able to meet with the art group on a regular basis for up to 10 weeks.

During this time, they will have the opportunity to meet new people, develop skills and confidence and create a DVD for us to use to highlight any barriers that get in the way of independence and lifestyle. If you are or know anyone who is 18-25 years who has a learning difficulty or disability (sensory/physical), please encourage them to contact us.

Other visits have been made to a range of Care Homes, Supported Accommodation and other organisations including: the New Supported Accommodation Scheme in Trowbridge, the Gables Registered Care Home in Chippenham and the new Mind Support Service at the Gifford's surgery in Melksham.

We also attended the Carer's Rights Day in Swindon, an update of the National Carers Strategy was discussed and also the potential to support more local agencies to develop their ongoing work.

As with all our visits we continue to offer the chance to meet Service Users to share information and help with giving feedback to Commissioners, and agencies that can help with individual issues, or ongoing review and the planning of future Service Provision.

Information Feature

UP AND RUNNING!! SWINDON OLDER PEOPLE'S FORUM (SOPF)

Contributed by Dave Brown, Chair.

Perhaps not running as such but certainly moving along at a fair pace, is the newly formed Swindon Older People's Forum (SOPF). So what will the Forum aim to do and how will it make a difference? Older People's Forums exist throughout the UK and all operate slightly differently but at the heart of their existence is the desire to be fiercely independent of outside influences whilst seeking to promote the welfare and interests of older people. When they are effective they help this age sector to have a louder voice on matters which impact on their everyday lives by capturing, and helping to resolve, their issues and concerns.

Swindon Older People's Forum has already made it clear that it will ensure that it does not overlap with, or antagonise, the activities of existing groups, clubs and organisations across the Borough. However from April 2012 the "One Swindon" vision will see major changes in the way that service providers (local authority; emergency services; NHS etc.) will interact with, and engage with individuals and organisations. SOPF's development over the next few months needs to reflect these changes and will therefore focus on:

- Continuing to raise awareness of its existence amongst the service providers
- Widening membership and participation
- Exploring partnership opportunities with organisations who have like minded interests.

Regardless of the general enthusiasm and support for an Older People's Forum here in Swindon, the impending changes locally provide an even greater need to ensure that the voice of older people is included and heard.

If you would like to join us, or you would like to know more, contact either:

Dave Brown (Chair) 01793 612037 or email: dave.abrown@btinternet.com

Carole Brownlee (Secretary) 01793 692636 or email: safetycollege@ntlworld.com

Swindon - Lisa Chadwick



We had great delight in celebrating WSUN's 20 years with all of our members at the end of last year. Now we're in 2012 there are many more changes and challenges ahead of us! Here are some events that Swindon has been involved in over the past few months.

We attended a **Community Consultation Event** hosted by Swindon Borough Council (SBC). The consultation included adult services within the community and how SBC can work together with other organisations to work smarter, more effectively and within their budgets. Organisations from different areas of the community were invited to give their views and comments, all the information would then be considered before they finalise the changes.

Fairer Charging Event - Swindon Borough Council - Throughout January several drop in sessions, covering all of the Swindon area, were organised by Swindon Borough Council about the proposals of the new fairer charging policy. In Swindon they want to make sure that the new charging policy is fair and asked for input from as many people as possible who use these services. There will be some interesting changes taking place which should be fairer for everyone from extra care services to disabled parking badges. If you would like a leaflet regarding these changes please contact me.

Swindon Forums

We will be holding two Swindon forums in the Spring. One on **Monday 26th March** at **Ellendune Community Centre, Wroughton**, and the other on **Tuesday 17th April** at **Meadowcroft Community Rooms, Stratton** both from **10.30am-2.30pm**. Guest speakers will attend to give presentations about Adult Social Care and the Great Western Hospital. These events will be very informative regarding the future of Swindon health and social care and we would be delighted if you can join us.

There are some changes taking place for **The Wheelchair Focus Group**. At present, we do not have as many service users attending the group as we would have hoped.

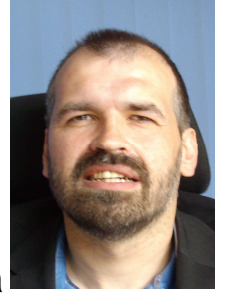
At the last meeting in January it was proposed that the group expand its remit to cover all social care services, therefore anybody who has difficulties with mobility and their carer's and relatives will be welcome. To reflect this, we have renamed the group '**The Swindon Mobility Club**'. The new format will be in the style of a coffee morning which will include specific topics for discussion to be decided by the service users.

We will continue to hold meetings on a monthly basis at Clapham Hobbs with the next meeting taking place on **Thursday 1st March from 10.30am-12.30pm**. Please feel free to drop by and have a coffee and a chat.

We will advertise future meetings on our website, however, if you do not have access to the internet please call any of the numbers below for more details.

We will keep you updated with news from WSUN Swindon. If you would like to contact us via post/telephone or email details below please feel free to do so. We would love to hear from you. Tel: 07592034480 Wednesday & Thursday pm, or 01380 871800 Tuesday. Email: swindon.wsun@virgin.net

Martin Fortune - Research & Academic Liaison Officer



Personal Independence Payment (PIP) update

WSUN has told the PIP (Policy Section) to make an Easy Read or a "Plain English" version of this consultation which they have done. Unfortunately not all the supporting documents are in an Easy Read format most likely because much of the content is still being talked about in Government.

On 16 January 2012, the PIP Team published more detail on the second draft of the Personal Independent Payment assessment criteria. The PIP Team are seeking further views from disabled people and their organisations to ensure that they get the assessment criteria right. The consultation will run for 15 weeks, from 16 January to 30 April 2012. You can view this consultation by visiting the DWP website <http://www.dwp.gov.uk/consultations/2012/pip.shtml> where you will find more information.

The final draft assessment regulations will be laid before Parliament later this year, subject to Royal Assent of the Bill, and will be subject to Parliamentary scrutiny through the 'affirmative procedure'. This means that to become law they must be approved by both the House of Commons and the House of Lords. You can view the Personal Independence Payment Policy by visiting the DWP website: <http://www.dwp.gov.uk/policy/disability/personal-independence-payment/>

You can use this information to put together your own individual response. However, WSUN will be replying to the PIP "Assessment Thresholds and Consultation". If you would like to support us in giving your views on these concerns, could we please ask you get your comments back to us, **by no later than Tuesday, 10th April 2012**, so that we will have a chance to collate your comments, in time to meet the **PIP Team deadline, of Monday, 30th April 2012**.

More information can be found on our website along with information around:

- PIP Reforms in the Bill - Amendments
- The Implementation Development Group
- Welfare Reform Bill - Summary
- Universal Credit
- Fraud and Error
- Housing Benefit Changes
- Update on Proposals to time limit Employment Support Allowance (ESA)
- The Work Programme
- Brief Updates

To view this information please visit <http://wsun.co.uk/consultations/>
If you follow this link below, it provides the consultation in different formats, (including; Easy Read, Rich Text, British Sign Language and Large Print Formats.) <http://www.dwp.gov.uk/consultations/2012/pip.shtml>. If you require these documents, in hard copy, or in any of the above formats, do contact WSUN.

Wiltshire Independent Travel Support (WITS)

The WITS Project continues to be funded by Wiltshire Council at present.

We are being kept busy by referrals from individuals and organisations such as schools and colleges and supported living accommodation. During the past few months WITS has successfully supported students, from St Nicholas School Chippenham, to learn about road safety, personal safety and travelling on a bus. They completed several successful outings to the Library and enjoyed the experience. The WITS Team was hugely supported by Debi, one of our volunteers.

WITS is currently in talks with another Local Authority to see if we can support some of their young adults to travel independently to college.

Amazingly WITS is fast approaching its fifth anniversary. Lookout for information on how we plan to celebrate this milestone.



From right to left:

Christine Keepence, Indie, Lisa Hawkins, Peter North, Sally Cobb

Information Feature

IT CAN HELP was founded in 1994 as a programme of BCS, The Chartered Institute for IT.

They offer FREE computer support to disabled people and are sponsored by the Marchday Charitable Trust.

How they can help?

- Diagnose and fix most computer related problems;
- Install and set up hardware, software, internet, email and accessibility settings;
- Give impartial advice on IT equipment and software to suit your interests and abilities

Freephone (and Minicom): 0800 269 545 or email: help@itcanhelp.org.uk

Information Feature

Looking for the perfect cab

It's that age-old problem that what is one person's accessible taxi is someone else's access nightmare. But Helen Dolphin reports on a consultation which aims to find something that's right for everyone.

You can read the full article of this by visiting <http://www.disabilitynow.org.uk/living/motoring-section/looking-for-the-perfect-cab>

To participate in the consultation on better taxis visit dptac.independent.gov.uk

Wiltshire Involvement Network (WIN)



During the period of 1st December 2011 to the 31st January 2012 the Wiltshire Involvement Network has been involved with the following meetings/events:

- A very successful public meeting was held on the 5th December where members of the public were given updates from NHS Wiltshire, the Great Western Hospital and Wiltshire Council.
- WIN has also been working closely with Wiltshire Council to improve services for Sensory Impairment service users. Two meetings were held during December, one for the visually impaired community and one for the hearing impaired community.
- The HealthWatch Implementation Task Group and WIN Outreach Group met during December.
- Members were also involved with the AWP Equality Delivery System work. These members also attended the Wiltshire Equality Network event.
- WIN began the New Year with another Equality Delivery System event jointly put on by NHS Wiltshire and AWP.
- The WIN Officer attended the Regional LINKs meeting in Exeter.
- The Chairs met for their bi-monthly information sharing meeting with Elaine Scott, Compliance Inspector for Wiltshire with the CQC.
- The Chair attended the NHS Wiltshire Board meeting and also gave presentations at the Wiltshire Council HealthWatch consultation events.
- Members attended another equality event at the Royal United Hospital in Bath, Showcasing Equality.



For the full report of the above meetings/events please visit the Wiltshire Involvement Network website <http://www.wiltshireinvolvementnetwork.org.uk/documentsandreports.html> and click on [Report to Health and Wellbeing Board 31-01-12](#).

You can also request a copy of WIN's latest newsletter by contacting Tracie Clark, WIN Administrator on 01380 871800 or by email: winadmin.wsun@btconnect.com

Information Feature

COMPUTER ASSIST

Would you like to use a computer without the hassle and expense of buying one? With Computer Assist you will be able to gain the skills and confidence to use a computer to:

- Send and receive emails
- Apply for a job online
- Shop online
- Look on the internet for information
- Apply for housing online
- Compare prices online

Don't worry if you've never used a computer before, our team of friendly staff will help you and there is **no charge**.

Computer Assist is open Friday mornings from 10am to 11.45am at the Salvation Army, Foghamshire, Chippenham.

For more information please ring 01249 655458

Information Feature

Helping people to get online

Wiltshire Council is looking for people to use their skills and champion the benefits of getting online.

The Wiltshire Online team is launching a new volunteering initiative in the Melksham area to help more people to get online and confident in using the internet.

This scheme is part of the council's four year programme to roll out superfast broadband to a minimum of 85 percent and up to 95 percent of premises across the county. The volunteering project will see 'digital champions' help people learn the skills they need to get online and benefit from faster, more reliable broadband.

Wiltshire Online is now working with the Volunteer Centre Wiltshire to recruit a number of digital champions in the Melksham area. These volunteers will help with a pilot project due to start in the Melksham area later this month before the scheme is rolled out across the county.

Digital champion volunteers can give as much or as little of their time as they want at a time and a place that is convenient to them.

The team is also looking for a local volunteer coordinator to help support the network of digital champions in the Melksham area.

If you would like to volunteer, or if you want to receive free computer help from this pilot project in Melksham, contact Jenny Wilcockson from the Wiltshire Online team on 01225 793349. More information about the volunteering opportunities and the Wiltshire Online programme is available on the Wiltshire Online website: www.wiltshireonline.org

Dates for your diary

Wednesday 13th March	WSUN's Wiltshire Forum - Help to Live at Home	Devizes
Monday 19th March	Wiltshire Voluntary Sector Mental Health Forum	
Wednesday 21st March	Swindon Parent & Carers Advisory Group	Swindon
Wednesday 21st March	WIN Mental Health Sub Group Meeting	Devizes
Monday 26th March	WSUN's Swindon Forum	Swindon
Tuesday 27th March	Wiltshire Goldies Day - an older people's event	Trowbridge
Friday 30th March (to be confirmed)	WSUN's Our Time To Talk - Mental Health Service User Group	Melksham
Thursday 12th April	WIN Public Event	Warminster
Tuesday 17th April	WSUN's Swindon Forum	Swindon
Monday 21st May	Wiltshire Voluntary Sector Mental Health Forum	
Saturday 26th May	WIN Event - Help to Live at Home	Devizes

Please contact us for more information on any of the above events/meetings.

Wiltshire & Swindon Users' Network's Contact Details



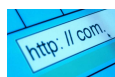
01380 871800



Wiltshire & Swindon Users' Network, Independent Living Centre, St. George's Road, Semington, BA14 6JQ



info.wsun@btconnect.com



www.wsun.co.uk

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